

WELCOME TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STUDENT SERVICES

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Focus on Executive Function

Our department focus this year was based around the book *Promoting Executive Functioning in the Classroom* by Lynn Meltzer, Ph. D. Each month, in our department meetings and in professional development meetings, district administrators led the teaching and related service staff through discussions regarding how to incorporate skills and strategies into their planning and instruction for students. These strategies were utilized to create an Executive Functioning curriculum for which teachers have spent a full year unpacking. The conversations throughout these meetings were rich with Executive Functioning strategies incorporated into unit plans. The dynamic collaboration between and among teachers across our district was powerful this year. Special educators have become the gurus in our district when it comes to Executive Functioning in the Classroom and are sharing their wisdom and toolkits with their colleagues across the district.



Celebrations in Professional Development

We have already engaged in hundreds of hours of professional development! Please find some of the topics below:

- Assistive Technologies
- Executive Functioning in the Classroom
- Social-Emotional Learning
- Differentiated Instruction
- Reading and Writing Strategies
- Positive Behavior Supports
- Collaborative Problem Solving
- Mindfulness
- STEAM in the Classroom
- Design Loop
- Building Positive Relationships
- Questioning Strategies
- Enhancing Student Engagement
- ... and much, much more!

School Counselors & Executive Function

During the 2017-2018 school year, several School Counselors participated in a three-part professional development course offered by the District to learn and become exposed to information, materials and resources available in the LPS Executive Functioning curriculum. In this work, School Counselors learned about what Executive Functioning means, tools available to help with planning, goal-setting, prioritizing and time-management with students as well as motivation, incentive and reinforcement strategies and tools. Additionally, information and related tools have been shared with School Counselors as they work individually and in small groups with students in supporting their academic, social, emotional and career/post-secondary needs. The information and resources will be explored further and turn-keyed within the department in the future.

Study Skills

Study Skills at Monmouth Court has designated time built in for students to reinforce Executive Functioning skills while completing course work. Students spend each month learning different skills to help them succeed both in and out of the classroom. Skills taught include organization, time management, planning, prioritizing, flexible thinking, self-monitoring and checking, and memory. One important aspect of Executive Functioning that many struggle with is metacognition, being aware of your own thoughts. The I-SEE Strategy is something that has been helpful to students at all grade levels. Using this strategy, the students realized that reading over notes or looking at the textbook is not an effective strategy, meaning it didn't result in a good grade. Using the mnemonic, students can self-check that when studying for assessments that their own personal strategy is:

1. **Individualized** or self-generated. Students know best what does or does not work for them.
2. **Systematic** or able to be used in a routine and regular way.
3. **Efficient** or it gets the job done successfully
4. **Effective** it works for the task at hand (different strategies work for different tasks).

Students in the class self-generated a list of I-SEE strategies to use in their classes. These include making a quizlet, flash cards, completing a teacher provided study guide AND get feedback from the teacher, or organize a study session with friends.

Parent Book Study on Executive Functioning

During the last several months, Middle and High School parents were invited to join Todd Mitchell for a book study focused on Executive Functioning (EF). The group met three times to discuss the book *Smart but Scattered Teens* by Peg Dawson, Colin Guare and Richard Guare. Parents learned how EF skills develop in adolescents, how to identify EF deficits in their children, and how to help support children in learning these important skills. Along with the book study, participants spoke with Domenick Bauer, a successful young adult who overcame his EF challenges in order to realize his dreams. They also considered the growing impact of social media and technology on EF skill development/impairment. Most importantly, parents were able to support one another as they learned to support their children along this journey. Please keep an eye out for future parent book studies that may be of interest to you.

